



Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

phrase would have prevented such obscure sentences as this: "The circumstance that it [i. e. every created object] is encompassed by a specific time, irrespective of the period, renders a specificator necessary." In this and similar passages a reference to Dr. Hirschfeld's German translation makes the meaning clear. In fact the German version reads much better than the English version. Dr. Hirschfeld has been excessively scrupulous in refraining from fully availing himself of the translator's right to paraphrase where word-for-word translation may be awkward or obscure. However, though the revision might have been much more fortunate, the slips are not very serious, and the book is welcome as it is.

A. WOLF.

DR. BÄCK'S "JUDAISM."

Das Wesen des Judentums, von Dr. LEO BÄCK, Rabbiner in Oppeln. Berlin (L. Lamm), 1905. Pp. 167.

THIS is one of the first volumes issued under the auspices of the *Gesellschaft zur Förderung der Wissenschaft des Judentums*. The title and substance of the book were no doubt suggested by Professor Harnack's *Das Wesen des Christentums*. The comparison which it inevitably invites is very exacting, but it stands the test fairly well.

As the title already suggests, the book is meant to be an exposition of the essence of Judaism. It does not pay much attention to the details of Jewish thought or practice, but presents us rather with what may briefly, and not altogether inaptly, be described as Prolegomena to Judaism. Within a very moderate compass we have an able characterization of Judaism, an interesting and warm exposition of its leading ideas and peculiarities. The book is divided into three parts devoted respectively to the consideration of the Character, the Ideas, and the Conservation of Judaism.

A book of this kind is peculiarly exposed to adverse criticism. It may contain too little to satisfy the conservatives, and yet too much to satisfy the liberals. Judaism, as our author rightly insists, is essentially a religion with a history. It did not come forth complete all at once out of the head of Zeus: it was of slow birth and gradual growth; it is still growing, and shall continue to grow as long as it has life. Now growth, be it never so continuous, involves change; and Judaism has known many changes. Hence a really accurate account of Judaism can only be found in a complete history of Judaism. But then as a history of conflicting, as well as merely growing, elements, it must lack that systematic, harmonious unity

which seems so necessary for the purpose of stimulating and satisfying the religious emotions. A writer on the Jewish Religion is therefore on the horns of the following dilemma: His account is either accurate (because it is comprehensive) but not harmonized, or else it is harmonious (through being eclectic) but not altogether accurate. For most purposes the latter alternative is to be preferred. The conservative Jew must make his selection, and the liberal Jew his; and mutual criticism is unnecessary, because so obviously simple. But to a writer who takes upon himself the special task of expounding the inmost essence of Judaism, the difficulty is more serious. And Dr. Bäck has not surmounted it, by any means, though he has not altogether failed either. As a whole the book is remarkably liberal in tone. It would seem that even conservatism, at all events intelligent conservatism, must be liberal when the fundamental principles of Judaism are concerned. It is primarily in matters of detail that it becomes differentiated from liberalism. This helps to explain a certain ambiguity in the attitude of present-day conservative Judaism, which presents one front to liberal Christians, another to liberal Jews.

Dr. Bäck writes with enthusiasm. Occasionally his fondness for antitheses brings him on the verge of inaccuracy, through exaggeration, though he corrects himself ere long. Thus, for instance, when he contrasts the Jewish with the Christian attitude towards Dogma, he minimizes the intellectual element in Judaism, as compared with the moral element, though he soon after draws attention to the continuous religious-philosophical activity in Judaism as one of its chief characteristics. Peculiarly enough he soon gets so enthusiastic over the intellectual side of Judaism that he is led into a strange misapprehension. Judaism, we are told, lays great stress on "the study of the Law" (including also its interpretation in the widest sense, even the reconciliation of Biblical theology and secular philosophy), simply because, unlike other religions, it demands a Faith acquired by personal study and reflection, not a Faith based on mere authority. In proof of this he points out that, in the Bible, the authors are more or less ignored: the claims of the ideas are thus made to rest on their own intrinsic merits; stress is laid, not on *whose* ideas they are, but on *what* they are. This surely is a quaint reason. If the Biblical authors recede into the background, it is not in order to eliminate the element of external *authority*, but in order to give due prominence to *divine* authority, as distinguished from *human* authority. For, explicitly or implicitly, the formula "thus saith the Lord" ushers in every Biblical doctrine or precept. True, the divine authority for an idea may ultimately have to be sought in its own intrinsic worth—but that is another story.

However, these are but slight blemishes. The book as a whole is stimulating. The numerous references to sources are valuable. An index would have been welcome.

A. WOLF.

DR. CHOTZNER'S ESSAYS.

Hebrew Humour and other Essays, by J. CHOTZNER, Ph.D., Late Hebrew Tutor at Harrow. London (Luzac & Co.), 1905. Pp. 186.

THIS is a volume of sixteen Jewish essays written mostly in a light journalistic style. If we had an adequate supply of good English books on Jewish subjects, Dr. Chotzner would most probably not have thought it worth while collecting and publishing these essays in book-form. But in our present dearth of such books, the volume before us may be welcomed by many readers. The numerous Jewish literary societies now in existence may find this volume of essays very useful on occasions of difficulty or disappointment. The essays are all conveniently brief, unpretentious, and interesting.

The first five essays are devoted to Biblical subjects—"Humour of the Bible," "The Bible and the Ancient Classics," "Art among the Ancient Hebrews," "The Life of the Hebrew Women of Old," "Curiosities of certain Proper Names in the Bible." To the modern reader these essays may seem rather feeble. The author's attitude towards the Bible is ultra-conservative, and some of his remarks are quaintly old-fashioned. Deborah and Hannah were "composers of excellent odes," and their names, like so many other Biblical names, "prognosticated" and "foreshadowed" all sorts of things wise and otherwise. The identification of הרמון with חרם (forbidden) and *Harem*, is an etymological curiosity that bids fair to rival the identification of נחלת with the German *Nachlass*. What exactly does the author allude to when he remarks (p. 15) that the Romans "had already swayed the sceptre over the Hebrews in the year 50 A.D."? On the same page occurs the expression "inanimate life"; on the following page, the word "tutor" is very loosely applied to Nicolaus de Lyra in relation to Luther; on p. 29 the ancient Hebrews are credited with perfection "in science and the art of music." To these and similar loose expressions one must, of course, add the word Humour, which our author employs with remarkable latitude.

Dr. Chotzner is at his best when he comes to the more modern Hebrew writers. The three essays on "Immanuel di Roma,"